

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

March 3, 2003            LB 54

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Is that what your objection is, or you don't want the issue raised on this bill?

SENATOR ERDMAN: Senator Chambers, I think it's clear that the process in place at the department, under LB 54, is the issue of obtaining federal funds. It's clear also that those individuals who are in foster care are not placed based on other circumstances other than whether the individual is a relative of that individual and it's in the best interests of that child or, if they are in a nonrelative side of it, whether they're licensed. So, from that standpoint, I don't...I can't say that there is proof that there is a problem of discrimination.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: If this bill does not pass, are you telling me that some federal funds would be implicated by its failure to passage...to pass?

SENATOR ERDMAN: What will happen is, is that there will be...the obligation of the state will be the same as what it is and there will be no opportunity to either add to those obligations or to replace those with federal funds. So there's about \$300,000 that could go into our foster care program if LB 54 were to pass.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: And you are willing to say forget those \$300,000 if to get them this amendment that I'm offering would have to be adopted. Is that where you are?

SENATOR ERDMAN: Senator Chambers, I think we can accomplish the same goal that you have, because the process is in place and working now, without the definition of "relative" in here to make sure that there isn't discrimination on any standpoint of whether that individual is a relative or not, or what those limitations are, because the process in place clearly outlines that individuals who are relatives of the foster child can be placed with them, and they don't take into consideration whether or not that individual has one sexual orientation or another.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But, Senator Erdman, there has been no definition of "relative" until today, and I do not want the fact that we will not include this language to be used by a judge or